

THE voys of peple touchede the hevene,
So loude cride they, with murie stevene,
God save swich a lord, that is so good,
He wilneth no destruccoun of blood!

Poon the trompes and the melodye
And to the lystes rit the compaignye
By ordinance, thurghout the citee large,
Hanged with clooth of gold, and nat with sarge.
Ful lik a lord this noble duc gan ryde,
Thise two Thebanes upon either side;
And after rood the queene and Emelye,
And after that another compaignye
Of oon and oother after hir degre.

And thus they passen thurghout the citee,
And to the lystes come they by tyme.
It nas not of the day yet fully pryme
Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hie,
Ypolita the queene and Emelye,
And othere ladys in degrees aboute.

Unto the seetes precesseth al the route;
And westward, thurgh the gates under Marte,
Arcite, and eek the hondred of his parte,
With baner reed, is entred right anon.
And in that selve moment Palamon
Is under Venus, estward in the place,
With baner whyt, and hardy chiere and face.

IN al the world, to seken up and doun,
So evne withouten variacioun,
Ther nere swiche compaignyes tweye;
for ther was noon so wys that koude seye
That any hadde of oother avauntage
Of worthynesse, ne of estaat, ne age,
So evne were they chosen, for to gesse,
And in two renges faire they hem dresse.

Whan that hir names rad were everichoon,
That in hir nombre gyle were ther noon,
Tho were the gates shet, and cried was loude,
Do now youre devoir, yonge knyghtes proude!

THE heraudes lefte hir prikyng up and doun;
Now ryngen trompes loude and clarioun;
Ther is namore to seyn, but west and est,
In goon the speres ful sadly in arrest;

In gooth the sharpe spore into the syde.
Ther seen men who kan juste, and who kan ryde;
Ther shyyveren shaftes upon sheeldes thikke;
He feeleth thurgh the herte/ spoon the prikke.
Up spryngen speres twenty foot on highte;
Out gooth the swerdes as the silver brighte;
The helmes they tohewen and toshrede;
Out brest the blood, with stierne streemes rede;
With myghty maces the bones they tobreste.
He, thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan threste,
Ther, stomblen steedes stronge, and doun
gooth al;

He, rolleth under foot as dooth a bal;
He, foyneeth on his feet with his tronchoun,
And he, hym hurtleth with his hors adoun;
He, thurgh the body is hurte, and sithen take,
Maugree his heed, and broght unto the stake,
As forward was, right ther he moste abyde;
Another lad is on that oother syde.
And som tyme dooth hem Theseus to reste,
Hem to refresshe and drynken, if hem leste.

ful ofte a day han thise Thebanes two,
Togydre ymet and wrought his felawe wo;
Unhorsed hath ech oother of hem tweye.
Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgopheye,
Whan that hir whelpe is stole whan it is lite,

So cruell on the hunte, as is Arcite
for jelous herte upon this Palamon;
Ne in Belmarye ther nys so fel leoun
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,
As Palamon to sleen his foo Arcite.
The jelous strokes on hir helmes byte;
Out renneth blood on bothe hir sydes rede.

SOM tyme an ende ther is of every dede,
for er the sonne unto the reste wente,
The stronge kyng Emetreus gan hente
This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,
And made his swerd depe in his flessch to byte;
And by the force of twenty is he take
Anyolden, and ydrawe unto the stake.
And in the rescous of this Palamon,
The stronge kyng Lygurge is born adoun;
And kyng Emetreus, for al his strengthe,
Is born out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe;
So hitte him Palamon er he were take;
But al for noght, he was broght to the stake.
His hardy herte myghte hym helpe naught,
He moste abyde, whan that he was caught,
By force, and eek by composicioun.

WHO sorweth now but woful Palamon,
That moot namore goon agayn to fighte?
And whan that Theseus hadde seyn this
sighte,

Unto the folk that foghten thus echon
He cryde, hoo! namore, for it is don!
I wol be trewe juge, and no partie;
Arcite of Thebes shall have Emelie
That by his fortune hath hire faire ywonne.

NON ther is a noyse of peple bigonne,
for joye of this, so loude & heighe withalle,
It semed that the lystes sholde falle.

WHAT kan now faire Venus doon above?
What seith she now? what dooth this
queene of love?

But wepeth so, for wantynge of hir wille,
Til that hir teeres in the lystes fille;
She seyde, I am ashamed doutelees.
Saturnus seyde, Doghter, hoold thy pees;
Mars hath his wille, his knyght hath all his boone,
And, by myn heed, thou shalt been esed soone.

THE trompes, with the loude mynstralcie,
The heraudes, that ful loude yolle and crie,
Been in hire wele for joye of daun Arcite.
But herkneeth me, and stynteth now a lite,
Which a myracle ther bifel anon.

THIS fierse Arcite bath of his helm ydon,
And on a courser, for to shewe his face,
He priketh endelong the large place,
Lokyng upward upon this Emelye;
And she agayn hym caste a freendlich eye,
for women, as to speken in comune,
Thei folwen al the favour of fortune,
And was al his, in chiere, as in his herte.

Out of the ground a furie infernal sterte,
from Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne,
for which his hors for fere gan to turne,
And leepe aside, and foundred as he leepe,
And er that Arcite may taken keepe,
He pighte hym on the pomel of his heed,
That in the place he lay as he were deed,
his brest tobresten with his sadelbowe.
As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,
So was the blood yronnen in his face.
Anon he was yborn out of the place
With herte soor, to Theseus paleys.
Tho was he korven out of his harneys,
And in a bed ybrought ful faire and blyve,
for he was yet in memorie and alyve,
And alwey cryng after Emelye.

WHICH Theseus with al his compaignye
Is comen hoom to Atthenes his citee,
With alle blisse and greet solempnitee;
Al be it that this aventure was falle,
he nolde noght disconforten hem alle.
Men seyden eek, that Arcite shal nat dye,
he shal been heeled of his maladye.
And of another thyng they were as fayn,
That of hem alle was ther noon yslayn,
Al were they soore yhurt, and namely oon,
That with a spere was thirled his brest/boon.

To othere woundes, and to broken armes,
Somme hadden salves, & somme hadden charmes,
fermacies of herbes, and eek save
They dronken, for they wolde hir lymes have,
for which this noble duc, as he wel kan,
Conforteth and honoureth every man,

And made revel al the longe nyght,
Unto the straunge lordes, as was right.
Ne ther was holden no disconftyng,
But as a justes or a tourneyng;
for soothly ther was no disconfture,
for fallyng nys nat but an aventure;
Ne to be lad by force unto the stake
Anyolden, and with twenty knyghtes take,
O persone allone, withouten mo,
And haryed forth by arme, foot and too,
And eek his steede dryven forth with staves,
With footmen, bothe yemen and eek knaves,
It nas aretted hym no vileynye,
Ther may no man clepen it cowardye.

WHICH anon duc Theseus leet crye,
To stynten alle rancour and envye,
The gree as wel of o syde as of oother,
And eyther syde ylik as ootheres brother;
And yaf hem yiftes after hir degree,
And fully heeld a feeste dayes three,
And convoyed the kynges worthily
Out of his toun, a journee largely,
And hoom wente every man the righte way.
Ther was namore, but fare wel! Have good day!
Of this bataille I wol namore endite,
But speke of Palamon and of Arcyte.

WELLET the brest of Arcite, & the soore
Encresseth at his herte moore and moore.
The clothered blood, for any lechecraft,
Corrupteth, and is in his bouk ylast,

That neither veyne/blood ne ventusyng,
Ne drynke of herbes may ben his helpynge;
The vertu expulsif, or animal,
fro thilke vertu cleped natural,
Ne may the venym voyden ne expelle.
The pipes of his longes gonne to swelle,
And every lacerte in his brest adoun .
Is shent with venym and corrupcioun.
Hym gayneth neither, for to gete his lif,
Vomyt upward, ne downward laxatif;
Al is tobresten thilke regioun,
Nature hath now no dominacioun.
And certeinly, ther nature wol nat wirche,
farewel phisik, go ber the man to chirche.
This al and som, that Arcite moot dye,
for which he sendeth after Emelye,
And Palamon, that was his cosyn deere,
Thanne seyde he thus, as ye shal after heere.

DECLARE o point of alle my sorwes smerte
To yow, my lady, that I love moost;
But I biquethe the servyce of my goost
To yow aboven every creature,
Syn that my lyf it may no lenger dure.

Alas, the wo! alas, the paynes stronge,
That I for yow have suffred, and so longe!
Alas, the deeth! alas, myn Emelye!
Alas, departynge of our compaignye!
Alas, myn hertes queene! alas, my wyf!
Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!

What is this world? what asketh men to have?
Now with his love, now in his colde grave
Allone, withouten any compaignye,
farewel, my swete foo! myn Emelye!

And softe taak me in youre armes tweye,
for love of God, and herkneeth what I seye.
HAVE heer with my cosyn Palamon
Had strif and rancour, many a day agon
for love of yow, and for my jalousye.

I And Juppiter so wys my soule gye,
To speken of a servaunt proprely,
With alle circumstaunces trewely,
That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and knyghthede,
Wysdom, humblesse, estaat and heigh kynrede,
fredom, and al that longeth to that art,
So Juppiter have of my soule part,
As in this world right now ne knowe I non
So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,
That serveth yow, and wol doon al his lyf.

And if that evere ye shul ben a wyf,
for yet nat Palamon, the gentil man,
And with that word his speche faille gan,
And from his feete up to his brest was come
The coold of deeth, that hadde hym overcome,
And yet mooreover, in his armes two
The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago.

Oonly the intellect, withouten moore,
That dwelled in his herte syk and soore,
Gan failen when the herte felte deeth,
Dusked his eyen two, and failed breeth.
But on his lady yet caste he his eye;
His laste word was, Mercy, Emelye!
His spirit chaunged hous, and wente ther,